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GARBAGE-REDUCTION PLANT NOT A NUISANCE.

THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO DECIDES THAT A LEGALLY AUTHORIZED AND PROPERLY CONDUCTED GARBAGE-REDUCTION PLANT IS NOT A PUBLIC NUISANCE.

A company which owned and operated a reduction plant for disposing of the garbage of the city of Toledo was indicted for maintaining a public nuisance. On the trial it appeared that the contract between the city and the company was made under express legislative authority, that the plant was erected and operated under strict supervision by municipal officers, and that it was conducted with as little annoyance to persons in the vicinity as possible.

The jury found that offensive odors came from the plant, and the lower court took the view that it was a nuisance. A fine was imposed and the court ordered the nuisance abated. Compliance with this order would have necessitated the abandonment of the plant.

The Supreme Court of Ohio reversed the judgment, holding that as the plant was constructed and operated for the benefit of the public and by legislative authority, it could not be successfully prosecuted as a public nuisance. The court intimated, however, that if the work of reduction was done in such a way as to cause unnecessary disturbance or annoyance to persons in the vicinity damages might be recovered.

The opinion is printed in full on page 3507 of this issue of the Public Health Reports.

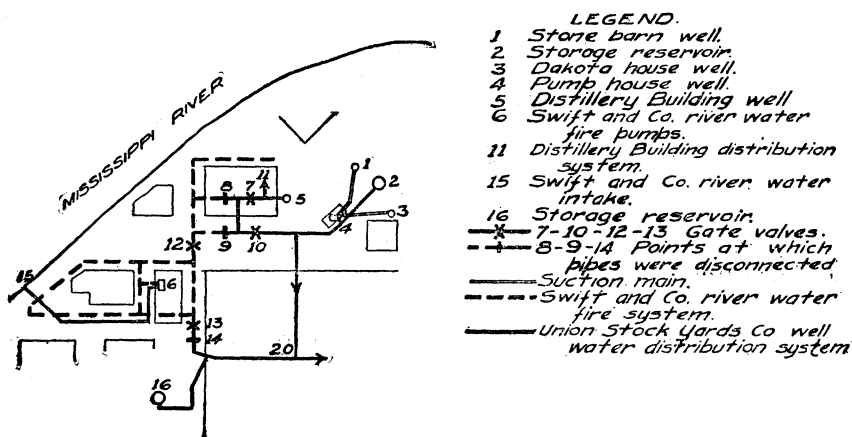
A WATER-BORNE DYSENTERY EPIDEMIC.

CAUSED BY USING WATER FROM AN AUXILIARY FIRE CONNECTION.

By H. A. WHITTAKER, Director Division of Sanitation, Minnesota State Board of Health.

On October 24, 1914, an outbreak of dysentery among the employees of the St. Paul Union Stock Yards Co. at South St. Paul, Minn., was reported by the Live Stock Exchange Co. to the Minnesota State Board of Health. Investigation showed that about 80 of these employees developed symptoms of dysentery between October 21 and 24, the majority of them on the night of October 21. It also brought

out the fact that all of these persons were using water from the distribution system of the St. Paul Union Stock Yards Co. The regular water supply of this company was pumped from three drilled wells located at the yards (see sketch, Nos. 1, 3, and 4), but on certain days of each week, when shipments of live stock were heavy, the supply was augmented by water obtained through a connection with the mains in one of the buildings of the Swift & Co. packing plant, known as the distillery building. The water supplied to this building was pumped from a drilled well. For fire protection there exists a system of mains supplied with water pumped from the Mississippi River through an intake shown on the sketch as No. 15. This fire-protection system was connected with both the Union Stock Yards distribution system (No. 20) and the distillery building system (No. 11).



The water was separated in these several systems by means of gate valves in the mains, located at Nos. 7, 10, and 13.

Under ordinary conditions, when the water from the distillery building supply was not being pumped to the Union Stock Yards Co. distribution system, the valves Nos. 7, 10, and 13 were closed and valve No. 12 was open. When it was desired to supply water from the distillery building supply to the Union Stock Yards Co. system, valves Nos. 7 and 10 were opened, and valve No. 12 was closed. When valves Nos. 7 and 10 were opened, the water from the distillery building supply was forced into the Union Stock Yards Co. system through two pipes, one the short pipe shown by the heavy black line on the accompanying sketch between valves Nos. 7 and 10, the other the portion of the Swift & Co. fire-protection system shown by the dotted lines between these same valves. The water from the distillery building system flowing through these pipes carried with it into the Union Stock Yards Co. system the Mississippi River water which filled these pipes before valves Nos. 7 and 10 were opened. It was

discovered during the investigation that Swift & Co. had furnished water to the Union Stock Yards system on October 19 and 20, at which time Mississippi River water doubtless had entered the Union Stock Yards system as described above.

During this investigation analytical control was maintained on the water supplies involved. Contamination was found present in the distribution system of the Union Stock Yards Co., but was not found in the water in the various drilled wells connected with the supply. These results corroborate the information just given concerning the source of the pollution of the supply. The distribution system of the Union Stock Yards Co. was disinfected with calcium hypochlorite and the contamination removed.

As soon as the above facts had been ascertained and it was definitely known that the contamination in the system of the Union Stock Yards Co. was due to the connections with the river-water fire system of Swift & Co., the two companies involved were notified and advised that the connections between the two systems must be broken. The companies concurred in this opinion and immediately carried out this recommendation. Sections of pipe were removed at the points shown on the sketch as Nos. 8, 9, and 14, which eliminated any further possibility of contamination from polluted Mississippi River water.

Inasmuch as it was feared that typhoid infection might have been carried in the polluted river water, all persons having used this supply for drinking purposes were urged to be inoculated with typhoid vaccine, which was furnished to the physicians of these companies free of charge by the State board of health.

The usual executive procedure followed by the Minnesota State Board of Health in handling epidemic work was carried out in this case. The executive officer, upon receiving notice of the outbreak, immediately directed the division of preventable diseases to investigate and determine the cause. Immediately following the epidemiologist's report, the executive officer ordered the division of sanitation to make a detailed study of the water systems and apply such measures as seemed necessary to remove the contamination and correct the apparent defects in the supplies involved.